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ABSTRACT

A 1-year, school-based collaborative research project explored ways in which children from 5 to 10 years of age learn social concepts related to acceptance and understanding of human diversity, strategies of conflict resolution, social problem solving, and ways to promote peace. The study was carried out by an educational anthropologist, three teachers at a Friends (Quaker) elementary school, and a research assistant. An ethnographic case study approach which employed repeated participant observations and spontaneous and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students was used. Videotapes of activities, discussions, and classroom and playground interactions were made and analyzed. Findings document group processes and classroom discourse, planned and spontaneous activities, and children's perspectives on issues related to their school, strategies for social problem solving, and peace. This paper presents an initial analysis of over 200 hours of observation data and interviews with teachers and children. Findings show the importance of the consistent creation of an open and supportive classroom climate which encourages children's self-expression, appreciation of others who have worked for social change, and repeated experiences in group processes dealing with social problem solving, consensus decision making, and centering techniques. (RH)

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No. 27 September 1988

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"If we are to attain real peace in this world, we will have to begin with the children." - Gandhi

"Sometimes I just wish we could gather the whole world together and tell them that war isn't necessary!" - Anna, age 7

INTRODUCTION

This case study sought to address the lack of qualitative empirical information on how young children, 5-10 years of age, learn social concepts related to acceptance and understanding of human diversity, strategies of conflict resolution, social problem-solving, and ways to "promote peace." This one year study was a school-based collaborative project carried out by an educational ethnographer, three teachers at a Friends (Quaker) elementary school and a research assistant. The research documents in detail the group processes and classroom discourse, planned and spontaneous activities, and children's perspectives on issues related to their school, strategies for social problem-solving and peace. Data was collected over a one year period, including the 1987-88 school year.

The project will culminate in the production of a videotape presentation about strategies for promoting peace and perspective-taking in young elementary children, based on how the teachers and children at this Friends school deal with related issues and problems in day to day practice and discourse. This paper presents an initial analysis of the observation and interview data and raises issues and questions related to teaching about social issues with young children. It also addresses methodological issues in attempting to gain more insights into children's <u>own</u> perspectives on social issues as they are incorporated on a daily basis in their school environment.

<u>Theoretical Framework and Background</u>

The theoretical framework for this study comes from Sleeter and Grant's (1987; 1988) paradigm of "education that is multicultural and social

reconstructionist." Education that is multicultural goes beyond more typical forms of multicultural education to include race, class, gender, age and exceptionality. This construct also emphasizes preparing students to analyze and challenge oppression based on race, social class and gender in their school, local community and society. This study also incorporates aspects of critical theory of schooling and curriculum (Apple, 1986; Giroux, 1981), in its emphasis on education as creating the possibility for social transformation, versus merely reproducing existing societal structures.

The present study also builds on and seeks to extend the peace and global education literature, as it applies to young children (preschool through elementary). Unfortunately, much of this literature advocates curricula or classroom approaches without citing actual research findings with young children. In Greiner's (1984) Peace Education: A Bibliography Focusing on Young Children, an emphasis is placed on the importance of early socialization in building children's self-concepts, acceptance of diversity, and caring attitudes about both people and the environment, while simultaneously developing their problem-solving skills.

Several early childhood teachers and researchers point out that children are frequently exposed to accounts of war and violence (including news, cartoons and adult conversation) and to war toys and games (e.g., Rambo, G.I. Joe and other toy aisle "dominators"), and , as such, are aware and concerned about war and possible alternatives (Carlsson-Paige and Levin, 1986; Churchman, 1986; and Lander, 1981). Churchman (1986) advocates a peace education curriculum for young children which emphasizes conflict resolution, sensitivity to individual differences and techniques for coping with the array of war toys and aggressive play themes.

A number of challenges are apparent when applying social reconstructionist and peace education models to early childhood and elementary settings (see Phillips, 1988; Ramsey, 1987). Some of these issues were analyzed and discussed in a previous ethnographic study of two mainstreamed, multicultural day care centers

which were attempting to create education that is multicultural, whose activities were actually more consistent with human relations or "individual differences" models (Swadener, 1986; 1988). Such issues include how to best determine what constitute developmentally appropriate, yet accurate and authentic, experiences for young, relatively egocentric children. Other issues, which are more fully developed in this paper, include the roles of the teacher in creating a supportive environment for children's self expression, social problem-solving and cooperative learning, and the specific activities which are unique to a Friends School, yet have potential application in other early elementary settings.

Thus, the lack of concrete, classroom-based empirical information on what constitute developmentally-appropriate and effective learning experiences for early elementary children regarding "peace and social responsibility concepts", combined with the school's desire to document and better understand the learning environment and processes in which teachers, families and children attempt to promote peace through positive human relations and increasing perspective-taking, led to the initial discussions about this collaborative research project and provided the initial questions guiding the study.

Teachers collaborating on the project expressed a desire not only to continue refining and reassessing their human relations, social issues, and peace curricula, but to document this process in such a way that it could be effectively shared with other teachers and groups concerned about teaching toward peace. The use of videotapes was seen as both enhancing the ethnographic data collection and analysis and potentially contributing to an edited videotape which could be used in workshops or inservice events.

Finally, the researcher's personal framework for ethnographic research is, in part, an attempt to document "encouraging practices" and more fully describe, explore and begin to explain the strategies and processes in classrooms where education is viewed as transformative and not merely reproductive of the status

quo. In other words, this project was intended to shed light on what can be done, in age-appropriate ways, to create a classroom environment in which social action, self expression, non-violent conflict resolution, and other important human relations values are promoted.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilized an ethnographic case study approach, which employed repeated participant observations and both spontaneous or informal and semi-structured interviews with children and teachers. It also utilized analysis of videotapes of activities, discussions and classroom and playground interactions. The video camera was used not only by the researcher and research assistant, but by the teachers collaborating on the project, in order to document relevant activities and interactions when the researcher or assistant could not be present.

Field notes made on each visit by both the researcher and assistant were typed or re-copied, and shared with the two lead teachers involved for "validity checks" and discussion of emerging trends or issues addressed by the study.

Setting and Subjects

The setting of the case study was a small Friends Elementary School, located in two large downstairs rooms of a Friends Meeting House in a rural, central Pennsylvania community (population 40,000). The school, which was started in 1980, served 43 children, 14 girls and 29 boys, ages 5 through 11 years, during the period of study. The downstairs of the Friends Meeting House was organized into two mixed-age "open classrooms," which included a shared library section in the older classroom. The upstairs was used by the school for lunch and after school activities, meeting for worship, music and dance classes and other special programs for children and parents.

Of the 43 children attending the school, five were "minority" group members, including three African-American boys (one in the younger group and two in the

older group), one Indian-American (immigrant from India) boy in the older group, and two children, one boy and one girl in the younger group, of Latin American heritage. The remainder of the children enrolled (38) were EuroAmerican, reflecting the relative percentages of cultural diversity in the community in which the school is located. In terms of religious diversity, a number of religious backgrounds, including both Christian and Jewish, were represented, with only one family having formal membership in the Quaker Friends Meeting which operates the school. A number of the families did attend meetings for worship on an occasional basis, however.

In terms of socio-economic status or class indicators, no explicit information on parents' education or employment status was collected. In general terms, the school serves middle class professional families, several of whom commute from rural settings into this community for work, and in order for their children to attend this school. The school appeared to be genuinely committed to providing access to families with limited incomes, and succeeded to the extent that 11 of the students received scholarship support from the school during the year of study. The major fundraising activities of the school (in particular, the annual Spring Fun Fair) are directed at this scholarship fund. The commitment to both a more culturally diverse and class- or income-balanced enrollment was expressed several times by both the director and the two head teachers at the school.

One downstairs classroom (the "front room") combined kindergarten and first grades and the other (the "back room") combined second through fourth grade children. The combined kindergarten and first grade group included 10 girls and 15 boys, and the older group included 4 girls, and 14 boys. During the year of study, each room had one lead teacher and one assistant teacher; in the case of the older room, the assistant teacher was completing an internship with an experienced head teacher as part of her preparation to take over the fifth grade class which was to be added the following school year. Sheri, the lead teacher in the older room, had 14 years teaching experience and Dorothy, the lead teacher in the younger room, had 5

years experience. Both lead teachers also had extensive volunteer community organizing experience (particularly in the areas of peace and alternative education).

The assistant teacher in the younger room had a preschool teaching background, and was preparing to become a lead teacher in a second kindergarten - first grade class to be added the following year. Other staff at this school included a full time Director and an Administrative Assistant. Both of these people also spent limited time in the classrooms, particularly when special activities were being carried out. Additionally, parents and grandparents were frequently present as classroom visitors and volunteers --particularly in the younger classroom. Other adults who were regular visitors to the school included parents and other teachers who taught special classes (e.g., dance, physical education, music, art and Spanish). Finally, the teachers frequently arranged for resource people and programs to come into the classrooms, in conjunction with specific units of study (e.g., a personal safety program; a visitor from South Africa; a woman in a wheelchair; and a man recently returned from Colombia).

Questions Guiding the Study and How They Were Derived

During spring, 1987, the researcher and entire school staff met to discuss the questions which would initially be addressed by the one year study. A number of issues related to the developmental appropriateness of activities and group processes at this Friends School were raised at these first meetings. It was also explained to the teachers that in ethnographic research additional questions and issues would emerge from the data and be investigated when relevant.

At this time, teachers were particularly interested in how children actually perceived frequent activities (e.g., centering and meeting for worship), and group processes used in conflict resolution (e.g., group problem-solving discussions and use of consensus decision-making). They were also anxious to have video documentation of both special and more typical classroom activities which could eventually be

edited into a videotape to be used in workshops for other teachers, as this Friends School receives a number of peace education consulting requests each year.

Out of these discussions, as well as the principal researcher's initial questions regarding ways in which education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist can best be applied in early elementary settings, came a set of major questions guiding the study. These initial questions were as follows:

1) What are age-appropriate learning experiences for elementary children which deal with acceptance of human diversity, non-violent conflict resolution and other forms of "social knowledge?"

2) How do children create their own learning experiences in these areas, and how do children differ in preferences for different social problem-solving strategies? Do these strategies "work" for all children, or do they work "better" for some children than others?

3) How do the philosophy and values of the school and its teachers influence the curriculum and what are some of the ways in which a Friends School conveys its philosophy throughout the curriculum and environment?

4) What factors appear to empower teachers to remain committed to a variety of innovative "possibilities" in education (including the possibility for peace)? What forms of support do teachers provide for each other and what forms of support do they seek "outside" the school environment?

Further questions which emerged after the first ten weeks of observations include:

1) What leads parents to select this "alternative" program for their children? (the majority of children enrolled are not from Quaker families)

2) How are planned units and activities, daily schedules and other "organizational structures" adjusted to address needs of individual children?

3) What are ways in which older children teach or work/play with younger children (their "buddies"), and vice versa?

4) How do all-school meetings, centering times and meeting for worship influence the school climate - in particular, how do children understand and interpret these frequent activities?

5) What are children's own conceptions of "peace" and the "possibility of peace"?

Observation and Videotape Coding System

In early December, 1987 the researcher met with the teachers and director to discuss a potential system for categorizing and further coding the field notes. By

that time, close to 200 hours of classroom observation had been made, and 15 hours of classroom interactions videotaped. Beyond this coding system, it was agreed that themes which had emerged from the first half of the observation period would be described in more detail.

The initial categories around which data were coded are as follows:

1) Teacher discourse and interactions with children

   a) Asking for children's ideas and suggestions

   b) Praising, describing and showing respect for children's opinions, or appreciation for their contributions

   c) Intervening in children's disputes; dealing with children's arguments or aggression

   d) Giving corrective or re-directive feedback; clarifying rules or expectations

   e) Teachers interactions with each other

   f) Teaching about specific issues of interest to the project (e.g., peace-making, fighting oppression, accepting individual differences, etc.)

   g) Teacher flexibility (e.g., changing schedule or planned activities to better meet needs of children - or staff)

2) Group Process

   a) Group (consensus) problem-solving discussions
      - Planned
      - Spontaneous

   b) Centering activities (in classrooms)

   c) Meeting for worship (upstairs in meeting room)

   d) Children helping mediate or solve problems or disputes with or between peers (both successfully and unsuccessfully)

   e) "Buddy system" interaction (i.e., mixed-age interactions)

   f) Small group decision-making or planning (i.e., a small group of children planning what they will build with blocks or legos or collaborating on a drawing)

   g) "Rug-time" (large group) discussions about issues relevant to project

3) Activities and Curricula

   a) Planned activities related to "human relations" or "peacemaking" (e.g., individual differences, perspective-taking, self expression, etc.)

b) Spontaneous activities related to same topics (e.g., a visualization or a song which had not been pre-planned)

c) Child-generated and/or self-directed activities (e.g., role-playing Martin Luther King, Jr. or writing a story during writing workshop related to one of the social issues recently discussed in class)

d) Planned activities related to peace, global perspectives, or historical background (e.g., learning about William Penn or Lucrecia Mott, "peace-makers" activities, learning about the the civil rights movement, or seeing save the children filmstrips).

e) Special presentations or activities using community resource people in classroom (e.g., visit from woman in wheelchair active on housing rights and accessibility issues, program on personal safety, "free, strong, and safe", from Women's Resource Center, Black South African guest, or other resource people and programs)

f) Background on how curriculum units are generated and selected (e.g., how much input from children, use of units repeated from earlier years, changes made in previous activities, etc.)

4) Environmental and Organizational or Structural Changes

a) Modifications in response to behavioral concerns (e.g., "preventive" changes such as two groups for calendar and sharing times in the younger room)

b) Schedule changes, including the process utilized by teachers to make recommendations and changes

c) Physical arrangement of classroom learning centers, materials, computers, or other environmental modifications (e.g., changes in the block area - from all blocks to all family-related "housekeeping" and dress-up props, to several large appliance boxes, to sensory activities, etc.)

d) Playground and upstairs uses, rules and issues (e.g., the spring group problem - solving process addressing "property rights" in the Friendly woods).

Interviews with Children

Beginning in early January, 1988, semi-structured interviews, based upon 10 questions, were conducted with all of the children at the school. Due to the number of questions, interviews were frequently divided into two parts -particularly for the youngest children. As in every aspect of this design, the teachers and director had input into the questions which were chosen for these initial interviews. Interviews were repeated for half of the children, in order to check for the reliability of their

responses. Children's responses to questions were, in all cases, consistent. In fact, most children remembered being asked these questions, and wondered why they needed to answer them a second time.

Interviews were conducted individually, in the classroom, and the attempt was made not to disturb children's activities or "take them away" from their work (or play). Children were also asked if they had time to talk, and their wishes were always respected. After the interviews had begun, several children approached the researcher asking, "Can we finish my interview today?", "Do you know how we talked and you wrote down what I said? Can we do that again today?", or "Can we go back to the book corner so we can 'review' me?", which seemed indicative of the unobtrusiveness of the interviewing procedure.

Other issues in interviewing young children, of course, must be taken into consideration. These include the "right answer" problem (Hatch, 1988), which relates to children viewing the interviewer as a teacher or authority figure looking for correct answers It has been reassuring, in a humorous sense, that children do not necessarily view the researcher as such an authority figure, as evidenced by such comments as "I'll tell you about this, if you promise not to tell the teacher." An additional reliability check involved both the researcher and research assistant interviewing many of the same children, allowing for an additional comparison in children's responses.

Another issue, particularly with the kindergarten and first grade children, relates to their "pre-operational" thinking characteristics. Children who are egocentric, or who tend to answer questions based on recent or salient events, often give "unreliable answers" to interview questions. In addressing both of these issues, the combination of observational data (i.e., what children were saying outside the interview situation) and repeated interviews with children (to assess the consistency of their responses) was employed. Teachers also read and discussed children's interview responses, and were involved in interpreting this data.

The basic questions which made up the semi-structured interviews with children were as follows:

1. What do you like most about this school?
2. What are your favorite activities here at school?
3. When you have a problem (like a fight, or someone not sharing or hurting your feelings), how do you usually solve it, or work it out? Does this work? Why? or Why not?
4. Do you ever ask a teacher for help? What does she do?
5. When the group has a problem (give a recent example, such as sledding rules discussion), do you think it helps to have everybody talk about it and come up with ideas for solving the problem? What do you like about this way to solve problems? Is there anything you don't like abut it?
6. What happens during Meeting for Worship? (or: Tell me about Meeting for Worship.) What do you like best about it? What do you like least about it?
7. How do you usually "center"? Did you use different ways of centering when you were younger? (Asked only of children in at least their second year at this school).
8. When you think about "peace", what do you think about?
9. Is school a peaceful place?
10. Do you think peace is possible? Why? or Why not?

Less structured, on-going interviews questions were based on specific, on-going activities which addressed issues such as civil rights, peacemakers, disabilities, friends from other nations, and family stories. These informal, ethnographic interviews were conducted spontaneously during or following relevant activities, in both classrooms and on the playground. Some of these interviews were videotaped.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: EMERGING THEMES

Although data analysis is still underway, a number of themes related to the basic questions guiding the study have emerged from analysis of the field observations and tapes made by researcher and teachers. These are briefly summarized for the purpose of this paper.

Creating a "Friendly Place" - Interpreting Quaker Values in the Everyday School Lives of Children

On a February visit to Friends School, I was followed to the door by a 7-year-old girl who was asking me to stay longer and sit with her at lunch. When I explained that I had another job and, in fact, needed to go prepare for a presentation, I asked her if there was anything she would want me to tell people about her school. She said simply, "As long as you're here - you're a friend!".

This notion of creating a "friendly place" is conveyed in a variety of ways in both the more formal and informal curriculum. From singing "As we leave this friendly place" while exiting the meeting room (after Meeting for Worship), to "friendly snack" in the kindergarten/first grade room, to "friendly feedback" on each others' stories and poems in the older room, a very pervasive message of friendship and acceptance of everyone wherever they are is readily observed. Of course, the question of "to what degree is this internalized and acted upon in any meaningful way by the children?" is an important one to consider in evaluating the impact of the friendly and nurturant climate which the teachers constantly work to create.

It should be clarified, at this point, that the "friendly tone" which was created and promoted was not a superficial or "artificial sweetness" at times observed in early childhood teachers' communication with children. The tone or manner conveyed in observations of all four of the teachers was consistently genuine, matter-of-fact and authentic. In discussing this theme with all the staff, one teacher commented, "It almost feels as though we have a 'friendly satiation effect' at times!" This notion of creating a "friendly place" was clearly internalized by the teachers, and consistently conveyed throughout virtually all aspects of the program.

A few brief examples of ways in which the theme of "friends" was emphasized follow:

- Teachers, particularly in the young room, frequently addressed children as "Friend(s)," or suggest that children observe what "other friends are doing."
- "Friendly snack" was begun in the younger room, according to the teacher in response to isolation of some of the newer children and a perceived need for encouraging more friendships (particularly among the kindergarteners). This consisted of the teacher calling on individual children, who then picked a friend to eat morning snack with them. It was interesting to note that children did select different friends over time, and that cross-gender selections became more frequent.
- A "buddy system" (which will be discussed in more detail in a later section), in which older children were paired with younger/newer children in order to help them understand the ways things are done at the school, as well as sit with them during Meeting for Worship, or in special activities such as group problem-solving discussions.
- Book dedications; as children "publish" their stories, each book is dedicated, typically to a friend, family member or teacher.
- An extended series of units on individual differences, families, and friends around the world in the younger room - with much emphasis, particularly during the fall semester, on enhancing children's self esteem. Activities have included making a "Friendship Book," in which children describe what they like about other children, collaborative drawing, writing and reading activities, and making a friendship quilt.
- In the older classroom (second through fourth grades), frequent discussions of how peers' feedback, interactions or certain events made individual children feel. Such discussions are often framed in writing workshop activities including writing conferences, and in large group discussions. Stated another way, frequent encouragement of self-expression is seen in both rooms.

Cooperation vs. Competition - "They don't laugh at you here like they do at other schools"

Although the value of encouraging cooperative learning and discouraging unnecessary competition is related to the previously discussed theme of "promoting Quaker values," this section focuses more on the specific strategies observed which were intended to encourage cooperative play, learning and problem-solving. This value was also role-modeled by teachers' interactions with each other; teachers were in frequent communication and were often observed by the children working out questions or problems, or making decisions together.

Other examples of ways in which cooperation was fostered or encouraged include the following:

- Non-graded, mixed-age classrooms, encouraging peers to help each other in a variety of ways (e.g., at the computer, in learning to spell words or solve problems, and in collaborative art or building projects).
- Activities such as the "Kid's Edition" school newspaper which included children interviewing each other about hobbies, families, and other "human interest" stories.
- Frequent work observed in dyads or small groups (particularly in the older room), including example of cooperative building projects with blocks and legos, in which small groups had to plan and carry out designs cooperatively, based on certain themes children had brainstormed, including "space station," "inventions," and "pioneer days."
- Older children read from their work (poems, short stories, reports) to get feedback from peers, with "coaching" from teachers on ways to give constructive feedback.
- Emphasis on consensus decision-making (whether disputes or issues to be resolved involve two or twenty children, this approach of hearing as many sides as possible and choosing a solution together is frequently observed in both rooms).

- Informal encouragement from teachers for children with common "issues" to get together and for discussions. For example, Teacher Dorothy suggested, "Why don't those of you who have a little brother or sister get together after rug time and share about what it's like to have a 2-year-old brother or sister?"
- Teacher-guided discussions with older children regarding how they can get along better with their younger buddies, particularly during meeting for workshop and recess games such as soccer and dodge ball.
- "Peace-maker" buttons were given to children in the younger room who helped other children work out problems. This appeared to have both advantages and disadvantages, and was discontinued after a short while. The advantages included children's heightened awareness of their role in helping each other work out disputes or solve other types of problems. An apparent disadvantage was that children were focusing on obtaining the buttons, and were frequently reporting ways in which they had helped, even when no help was requested. Dorothy (the head teacher in this room) encouraged children to make their own peacemaker buttons or spontaneously make ribbons for each other. This was also one of the more "external reinforcers" of cooperation observed, which might be related to its short duration in this classroom.

Can and Should We Teach Children to Be "At Peace"?: Centering, Meeting for Worship and Other "Peaceful" Activities

One of the obvious distinctions of a Friends School from public school settings is the inclusion of such activities as "meeting for worship," "centering" times, and the use of visualizations and relaxation or meditation techniques with the children. It is particularly of interest, in this research, to attempt to uncover children's own understanding of and interpretations of these more spiritual aspects of the Friends School experience. Meeting for Worship occured upstairs every Wednesday morning,

and more informally in the individual classrooms on other mornings. On these other mornings it was generally referred to as "centering" time or "downstairs meeting."

During meeting for worship, children are expected to sit quietly and become "centered" - whatever this means to the individual child. After several minutes of silence (in which some children have their eyes closed but most do not), a child (or teacher, early in the school year) poses the "query," or question for everyone to think about and speak to aloud, as they wish.

Queries can deal with aspects of the school (e.g., "What makes this school a friendly place?", "How can we make sure older and younger children share ideas with each other?", or "How do you feel when people are arguing and fighting at school?") or changing seasons (e.g., queries dealing with the autumn leaves turning, the first snowfall or the last meeting for worship of the school year), to people children have been learning about (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., or William Penn) and current units (e.g., endangered species or children from Latin America or South Africa).

After several children have responded to the query of the day (or several minutes more of silence have elapsed, as happened frequently early in the school year), the child posing the querie says "Good day." This is followed by everyone (or nearly everyone) shaking hands with people they are sitting next to, and finding songs in one of the two song books to request. Three to five songs usually followed, with the "query leader" calling on children who are making requests. Favorite songs included "Thank you Kindly Friend Lucretia" (about Lucretia Mott), "Ain't Gonna Study War No More," a number of spirituals and "liberation" songs, the "Ballad of William Penn," "Let It Be" (John Lennon song), "Magic Penny," and "George Fox." As everyone left the meeting room (following Wednesday's Meeting for Worship), the teachers and children sang "As We Leave This Friendly Place."

The upstairs meeting is also a time when all-school activities or special events are announced, planned and briefly discussed. For example, the teacher of the younger group explained the Save the Children "partner schools" program to all the

children, following song time during a spring meeting for worship. She described how the program would match their school with a school in Latin America, where children would speak and write them in Spanish (which they are learning at Friends School) and got ideas to put on the application form. The previous year, an all-school project was the adoption of two whales, which was initially discussed at meeting.

At present, both observational and interview data are being analyzed further to determine what aspects are considered most "valuable" and enjoyable by the children, and how the attitudes toward various aspects of meeting times varies by the age of the children or other differences. Not surprisingly, one of the most common complaints (particularly from the kindergarten through second grade children) relates to the length of time they must sit still and be quiet. When older children stated any complaints (several had none) about upstairs meeting, most related to their younger buddies and their "wiggling," or "giggling" or "keeping me from centering" in various ways.

A number of these "antsy" behaviors, not surprising in five-and six-year-old children, have been observed. In some cases, special discussions to clarify expectations during meeting between buddies and a teacher have been observed, taking place immediately before meeting. In other cases, these activities are simply ignored.

In a discussion of issues related to meeting for worship, the teachers commented that there are more younger children this year than ever before (more kindergarten children and no fifth and sixth grade children for first time in several years). Comments from teachers included "The tone of meeting has changed, with fewer older children," "There's been greater depth in meeting for worship in the past, though some of the children are now raising some very profound issues at meeting," and "When we have a really good meeting, we do try to give lots of

positive feedback afterward--especially to the younger ones who really are trying hard."

Teachers also have discussed the problems which two fourth grade boys are having with their kindergarten younger buddies. "We have really tried to encourage them to hang in there with their buddy, even though they have wanted to give up at times."

When asked what their favorite part of meeting is, the majority of children have responded "singing." Others have responded "the quiet time," "quiet, so I can talk to God," and "the chance for the whole school to be together and talk about the query." One seven-year-old girl said, "I like the songs, but my favorite thing to do is get quiet, say prayers which no one else can hear, and hold God's hand." At that point her friend (also seven) said to her, "You're really into Christian stuff...you get so quiet!" A five-year-old said, "During meeting you can listen to the still small voice inside you, cause there is one." Another five-year-old commented, "I like meeting for worship because I get to rest and it's quiet after all the activities we play and not napping anymore...I like to be quiet and serious!"

Sometimes parents also join their children for meeting, although only one family is a member of the Quaker meeting. When asked about whether any parents had expressed concern about too much religion or spiritual emphasis in the program, both the teachers and the director stated that this had not been expressed by parents once children were going to Friends School. As one teacher stated, "The only time I've heard any concern about this from parents has been during open houses or other pre-placement visits to the school." Another teacher stated it this way, "We don't teach Quakerism here---we do it!"

It has also been interesting to question children about their "centering techniques," and how they have changed and improved over time at this school. One eight-year-old remembered vividly the first time she 'centered.' At the time she was interviewed (in January, 1988) she recalled, "I couldn't really center until the

first time, on 'Leprachaun's Day' last year, and we focused on green in our mind, and green flowed all through me. I liked it, but then I almost fell asleep." The guided visualization had involved focusing on the color green on St. Patrick's Day, and this experience remained vivid nearly one year later! Some of the older children even mentioned the music which they preferred for centering (in their classroom), or particular centering activities which "worked best" for them.

Children's Perceptions of Peace at School and in the World

The following is a summary of children's responses to the interview questions related most directly to peace and "peace education." These questions were "When you think of 'peace,' what do you think about?" "Is school a peaceful place?" and "Do you think peace is possible? Why or why not?"

Children's answers to the first question, "When you think about 'peace', what do you think about?" will be discussed "developmentally," with the youngest children's responses summarized first. Five- and six-year-old children's answers could be categorized into three types of responses: 1) the absence of fighting, robbing, or violence, 2) people who are peacemakers, and 3) pleasant experiences, places or activities with favorite people or pets. The most frequent responses for the youngest children were in this latter category, followed in frequency by the naming of peacemakers. Only two children discussed peace in terms of the absence of war or violence.

Examples of kindergarten children's descriptions of peace which fell within the first category, the absence of violence, included the following, "No army...places that don't have much peace," and "No killing or hurting people." Examples of responses which named peacemakers included, "Martin Luther King," "Something peaceful...like a peacemaker or God or something," "peacemakers...uh, Martin Luther King." Examples of five-year-old children naming pleasant experiences, places or activities included the following, "I think about my mother...I like to be

with my mother, " "I just think about trees, puppies, cats and all those things," "giving hugs to my friends," and "I think about bedtime."

Seven- and eight-year-old children's answers to the same question could also be grouped into similar categories, with more detailed responses and "combinations" of responses. More of the older children described peace in terms of the absence of war or violence, and several of these second and third grade children added more "political" responses to the interpretation of peace as the absence of war or violence.

For example, a seven-year-old boy stated, "I think about Ronald Reagan and disarming all the nuclear missiles...and he didn't even work to make a deal with Gorbachev, but he didn't want to look bad in front of other people," during his second interview he stated, "I think about me becoming President of the whole world and saying to the whole world 'No guns!' and stopping world from things they do...like bombing and starting World War III." Another seven-year-old responded, "I get worried, 'cause I don't want a war. I wish there was no such thing as war--not such thing as Nazis and Arabs...and Iranians...although my dad said most Arabs are good."

Second in frequency with the second and third grade children were descriptions of pleasant things, people and places. For example, a seven-year-old boy responded, "I think about food and stuff. I think about being nice to other people; being friendly." A seven-year-old girl said, "I think about birds or God or Martin Luther King and peaceful things." Another seven-year-old girl said, "I think about everybody liking each other instead of having war...and sometimes I think of green fields. But lots of wars are still going on!"

Three of the seven- and eight-year-olds said that they "didn't know" or "that's a hard question." By contrast, none of the kindergarten and first grade or the fourth grade children responded in this way.

Turning to the oldest children, ages nine and ten, all the children except one discussed peace in terms of the absence of war. The exception was a nearly ten-year-old boy, who said that when he thought of peace he thought of "Animals, 'cause when I grow up, I want to work on saving nature." He went on to describe in detail how he and the class had adopted two whales the previous year, and how some countries had stopped whaling while other countries only said that they stopped. He was particularly pleased that the "dream" of saving whales might be coming true, "It came true -- America did stop whaling!".

One nine-year-old girl first said she thought of peace in terms of "calm," then added, "and world peace--no fighting anywhere." A just-turned eleven-year-old boy said, "I think about nobody fighting, killing other people, or robbing." A ten-year-old boy observed, "When we play 'wars' it's kind of fun, but when the whole world's involved it's not fun then! You know when it's for real." The idea of knowing that war was real seemed to be increasingly present in the children's thinking about peace. The idea of political power having an impact on war, whaling, or other situations discussed by children was also, not surprisingly, more present in the older children's responses.

The next question the children were asked was "Is school a peaceful place?" The responses to this question also illuminated developmental differences. Seven of the youngest children simply said "Yes," or "Yup." Other five-year-old children who elaborated on their reasons for thinking of school as a peaceful place stated, "Yes, because there's lots of things to do like playing with friends," "I like it a lot, so there's nothing I don't like about it," and "Yes, I like it a lot here." It appeared that many young children interpreted this question to mean "Do you like school?", or "Is school a good place to be?"

The second and third grade children's responses to this also appeared to interpret the question in terms of whether school was a good place to be. Responses were typically more descriptive and included, "It's a good place to learn," "It's sort

of a peaceful place...and I do have lots of friends...sometimes there's more fights and problems, but not too much." Although none of these children stated that school was not a peaceful place, several did qualify their answers. These responses included, "Yes, as long as you don't get into fights," "A little bit," and "Yeah, I guess...if we got rid of some people it would be."

Among the older children (ages nine and ten), answers were more "conditional" than those of younger children. For example, one ten-year-old answered, "Kind of...still we fight a lot. It just depends." Two children said that school was a peaceful place "most of the time," and two children compared this school environment to others where they had gone. For example, one nine-year-old stated, "Yeah, I went away from two other schools, and then I came here. I had the meanest teacher before I came...but I may go back (to a public school) and ask for a kind one (teacher). Mom said it was my choice." Another child discussed how he felt more comfortable at Friends School, and felt that nobody made fun of him, as they had at another school.

The last question dealing directly with peace was "Do you think peace is possible? Why or why not?" All of the youngest children except two said "yes" to this question, and then explained briefly why they thought so. One negative response came from a five-year-old girl who stated, "No...just 'cause you don't really see it (peace) unless you close your eyes, and a lot of people don't really close their eyes." The other came from a five-year-old boy who stated, "No, I don't think all the armies would stop--even if we tried to have peace."

Some responses of the younger children reflected a "school context" and others a more "global context." An example of a "school-based" response came from a five-year-old girl who stated, "Yes, because everyone likes to be friends and that's why it's called a 'friends school'." Others bridged the classroom and global contexts, including, "Yes...because Teacher Dorothy is a nice teacher and if she was somewhere else and she went all around the world everyone would like her and she

could make peace!" Two children stated that peace was possible, "because there are peace makers." Another five-year-old stated, "Yes, because you get better in your mind...you can think the world is a very special place."

Several of the seven-year-olds had interesting responses to the question "Is peace possible?" Only one child responded that peace was not possible, asking, "In places there are still wars, so how could there be peace?" One child was unsure, stating, "Um...maybe yes, maybe no. I don't know if there'll ever be peace in the whole world." Several of the seven- and eight-year-olds referred directly to political situations in their explanations of why peace was possible. Other responses regarding why children thought that peace was possible included the following qualifications (from a seven-year-old boy), "Yeah, but not like right now - later. They'll have to disarm the missiles and the missile parts and stop making bullets for guns!" During a second interview the same boy (who is African-American) stated, "Peace is possible in some places...I don't think it's possible in America, but it is in Africa."

Finally, two seven-year-old girls stated fairly passionate feelings about peace being possible. One stated, "Yes! Of course peace is possible. I know because God told me!", and the other commented, "Yes...and sometimes I wish I could just gather the whole world together and tell them war isn't necessary!" Another seven-year-old girl stated, "Yes, because instead of fighting people can talk it out!"

The older children also were in general agreement that peace was possible. A nine-year-old girl stated, "Yes, cause people like Martin Luther King can help make peace." Two older boys made direct reference to Reagan in their responses. For example, "Yes, if we really tried. If it's...well, Reagan has a problem a lot, but if he doesn't build so many bombs and missiles, maybe the other side won't either! Like the summit (with Grobachev) - that might help." Another boy stated, "Yes...because people telling President Reagan-telling him about the warheads and to stop making them-this will help!" One of the more complex explanations came from an eight-

year-old boy who said, "Yes. Because if it was violence all the time and no one would get to do things without fighting it would be bad! We would have to have problems to have peace, and that would be hard. But we do that at school, so we could do that everywhere!"

The connections between creating peace at school and calling it forth in the world were particularly relevant to the issues addressed by this study, and will continue to be addressed in the following section.

Heightening Social Consciousness vs. the Egocentrism of Young Children: The Struggle to Teach Social Issues in Age-Appropriate and Ethical Ways

An interesting issue, as voiced by the teachers, is the dilemma of teaching social issues (from what could be described as a social reconstructivist perspective) without becoming dogmatic or actually limiting children's formation of individual opinions and values about critical issues. For example, one teacher recalled a school-sponsored field trip to participate in a Nuclear Freeze campaign march, which was not held during school hours, but was certainly promoted by the Friends Meeting, and the school. This teacher described a parent who was very "pro-freeze," but also held strong "let people-including young people-make their own well-informed decisions, based on information from several sides of such issues."

During January and February, examples included teaching about civil rights issues and a number of the methods of non-violent resistance employed, including civil disobedience. As these topics were discussed, more child-initiated conversations turned to questions such as "which adults go to jail for what?", and "when is it necessary-or the best option-to break the law?" During one discussion of the Jim Crow laws, for example, all the younger children (ages 5-7) were "voting" segregationist rules down in a sort of spontaneous rug-time role play, when one child held his hand up in support of these laws. His reason for thinking Jim Crow laws were a good idea was that, "they kept people from fighting and really hurting each

other." This child was eventually talked out of his position, or at least appeared to "change his vote" for the moment, yet this incident raised again the importance of listening for different individual perspectives in the classroom.

In the older room, civil rights-related discussions were obviously more sophisticated. For example, following a story which Sheri (the head teacher) had read, children were asked, "What kind of true information did we get from this story?" Comments (from 8-9-year-olds) included, "I never knew Pennsylvania ever made a proposal that black slaves could vote before the Civil War," and "I never knew the black vote was an issue before the Civil War."

The following represent some of the specific classroom activities or units which relate directly to social issues:

- For the week which included Veterans Day, a "Heroes and Heroines" theme included activities about children's favorite peacemaking heroes and heroines, which included making banners and a wall mural, as well as (for the older children) writing stories.
- During a two week unit "disability sensitivity" unit in December, a variety of perspective-taking activities included the use of child-size puppets, children's use of equipment such as walkers, crutches, leg braces, etc., and classroom visitors, including a visitor with multiple sclerosis who discussed issues of discrimination (handicapism), accessibility, hobbies and professional interests, and answered children's questions quite openly and thoroughly. This unit will be analyzed and discussed in depth in the write-up of the case study, as the age-appropriateness of the activities made this one a "model" unit. Teachers primary criticism of this unit was the short time (two weeks) devoted to it, and the "additive" tone this may have taken (vs. incorporating more handicap-awareness activities on an on-going basis).
- Several units have gotten into issues of respect for nature, emphasizing endangered species such as whales, and the environment (through an "above

ground archeology" unit which also addressed issues related to loss of fertile farm land to urban sprawl and other field-trip related activities, including visits to an area nature study center). This "earthkeeping" theme has been observed most frequently in the younger room during a recent "Friends Around the World" unit, which utilizes several filmstrips and other resources on developing countries from Save the Children. A "Potato Aid" project in the early autumn also related their school garden to a fund-raising project for assistance to drought victims in Mali. Balloons for child survival were sold at the Spring Fun Fair, to benefit primary health programs of UNICEF and Save the Children.

- Various "science, technology and society"-related discussions and activities have been observed with the fourth graders. These include discussions of using technology responsibly, and have engaged children in debates on whether technology is good or bad, and what actions can be taken to prevent bad aspects of technology.
- Several children in the older room have become active in letter-writing related to endangered species. The Director commented, "Some of the boys get more mail from Green Peace and other advocacy groups than I do here at school!" The school adopted two whales last year as a project (and used fundraising booths at the Fun Fair), and children often want to talk about these whales-including the one that died.
- Frequent field trips, as well as visitors to the school, definitely convey a community emphasis, in which current social issues are discussed and debated. This is, of course, more obvious in the discussions of the older (8-10) children.

Alternative Celebrations, Holiday Issues and Family Involvement

Although this emerging theme related to how a peace curriculum is created and conveyed will not be discussed in detail here, the following are brief accounts of

some of the alternative holiday celebrations of family-involvement events observed thus far in the school year.

- A celebration of William Penn's birthday included children studying about the life of this Quaker leader, writing and performing skits about his life, and having a school-wide birthday party. Language experience activities related to William Penn were observed in the younger room, while older students did research and wrote short stories about Penn.
- As described in the previous section, Veterans day and week emphasized heroes and heroines, and included discussions about many peacemakers.
- The traditional Thanksgiving celebration at this school is known as "Thankful Soup," which consists of a variety of activities culminating in a series of performances for parents (dance, song, plays) held after a large meeting for worship. This is followed by a simple lunch prepared by the children, which was attended by virtually all the parents. The majority of children's activities related to this very popular tradition seemed age-appropriate and consistent with the philosophy of the school. The concerns observed, however, relate to fairly typical Thanksgiving-related instances of Native American stereotyping and basic historical inaccuracy in what is taught and emphasized about the "first Thanksgiving." This will be discussed in more detail in the final write-up, but basically dealt with children's role-plays of Indians, complete with paper headdresses and tomahawks, which portray common stereotypes and did not, in the researcher's opinion, give children an "authentic Native American" perspective or experience.
- Both Christmas and Hanukkah were discussed, with Christmas "dominating" in some respects, yet with several appropriate activities planned in observance of both these winter holidays.
- In January, activities related to the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr. spanned three weeks, and included readings from several books on Dr. King,

the civil rights movement, current issues in racism (primarily with the older children), the importance of non-violent social change to the civil rights and other movements, and a variety of art, centering, and language arts-related activities focusing on the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. and other "peacemakers."

- On Presidents Day, during a discussion on George Washington and some of the early wars in which the U.S. was involved, children asked, "Why was war always used to solve problems?" and "Didn't they know they could talk over problems and not go to war?"
- Other events in this category included the annual spring fund-raiser, the "Friends Fun Fair" - a one-day event with food, booths (which last year served as fund-raisers for the whale adoption project and this year will raise funds for the "partner school" through Save the Children) and entertainment. Much preparation goes into the event, and virtually all parents are involved. The group process involved in decision-making, cooperative work on projects, service project discussions and other activities will likely yield very relevant data for the questions guiding the case study.
- A children's "Peace Choir" was begun in the spring, and performed both for the Fun Fair and a large art festival in the summer.
- The school year ended with a three day camping experience for all the children and teachers, in which many parents came out for evening talent shows and sing-alongs (as did the researcher).

<u>The Critical Role of the Teachers and Their Commitment to "Teaching Toward Peace"</u>

The teachers (both lead teachers and their assistants) obviously play a critical role in the consistent way in which strategies of "teaching toward peace" and respect for individual children are conveyed in the day-to-day classroom activities

and interactions. This discussion, as all that precede it, will be limited to some broad categories which have emerged in the first half of the study. The fact that the project is collaborative should also be re-stated at this point; teachers' interpretations of classroom occurrences and children's perspectives are a valuable aspect of this study, and teachers have cooperated at every juncture with the researcher's needs (including interviewing all the children, videotaping over many weeks, and time spent meeting with me).

The following are some of the evident attributes or patterns in the teaching style of the team-teachers at the school:

A high degree of flexibility is evident; teachers frequently discuss with each other and with the children what "is working" and what "is not," and adapt planned activities or schedules to better meet the group needs on a particular day. Early in the project the two lead teachers told me that the basic requirements to teach at this Friends School were "lots of flexibility and humor." I commented that patience seemed like another attribute, and the lead teacher in the older room clarified, "What you may see as patience may just be knowing individual kids and where they are at the time, and then trying to meet them where they are."

Another example of flexibility comes from the younger room, which this year had the largest number of new, kindergarten children this room has ever had. Dorothy (the lead teacher in the younger room) shared with me that several of the children were specifically referred to this program because it was felt that they had needs which would be addressed here (including children who were aggressive or considered "not quite ready for a public school kindergarten experience.") This may also have contributed to the many social "needs" which this young group demonstrated in the fall. Both Dorothy and her assistant teacher met several times early in the school year to discuss what changes would best help the group, and two changes they made were: 1) to expand on and continue the individual differences/self esteem unit longer to really work on helping children form

friendships and build more confidence, and 2) to split the large group into two smaller groups for group times such as calendar and sharing time, in order to decrease the "wait time" for children and the "group control" strategies required. Both of these modifications appeared to have made a differences for the children, as a number of the problems of the fall are no longer major issues with the group.

Communication is another extremely important aspect of the teacher's influence on the ways in which a respectful, peaceful climate is created. One of the things which strikes most first time observers at this school is the reflective speaking and the listening and valuing of children's ideas and feelings which the teachers consistently bring to the classrooms. In the younger room, phrases such as "it looks to me like you're feeling..., are you?", "What is happening here-let's listen to what_____says and then you can have your turn to talk," "Look around and notice what the other children are doing," as well as many open-ended questions about children's opinions, possible solutions to problems, and ideas. This process is not rushed, and generally does not sound as contrived as it may in print. In the o, both teachers also use a guided questioning approach in much of their teaching, and ask children questions such as, "Is this approach to writing (poetry) working for you? Why do you think it (is/isn't)?", "What are the things you would really like to learn about during 1988?" (asked the first week of January, and used to finalize plans for spring units of study), or "Would you like to work on that alone or with a friend?" Other questions are "How has (meeting for worship) been going for you lately?" or "Who has ideas for queries?"

The sense of humor referred to earlier is also notable in all the teachers here. A willingness to laugh at themselves (frequently catching my eye and laughing when something does not go according to plan or a child makes an interesting observation, etc.). A recent example of a very humorous start to a writing workshop in the older room consisted of a lengthy dialogue between Sheri and her students regarding "lying" and telling really big lies. It began with the "innocent" question, "Has

anybody here ever told a lie?" to which one boy responded, "If anyone doesn't have their hand up, they're lying," and culminated in everyone thinking up the biggest lie they could and telling it. This was part of a creative writing and poetry unit in January, and seemed to have the effect of truly "pulling out the stops" on some of the children's writing style. Sheri role-modeled her "big lie," beginning, straight-faced, by saying, "When I was in the astronaut training program..." and worked in a sort of performance style throughout this activity.

When critical or corrective feedback is given by teachers, it is almost always given in respectful and non-evaluative ways. A matter-of-fact firm tone and helpful manner are typically observed. An internal locus of control appears to be encouraged, as opposed to an external, teacher-controlled environment, where discipline is concerned.

DISCUSSION

Although data analysis is not complete, a number of patterns and related issues will be discussed in this concluding section, emphasizing implications for practice. These preliminary conclusions were derived both from analysis of the field notes, interviews and videotapes, and from discussions with the teachers and director both during and following the period of data collection. Spring, 1988 discussions with staff utilized group viewing of selected videotapes, which served as "evocative stimuli" for a group discussion of several classroom activities and patterns of interaction.

During the summer months the head teachers viewed many of the videotapes individually, making notes and using a set of categories developed with the researcher. In terms of age- or developmentally-appropriate approaches to teaching toward peace and social responsibility, the majority of activities observed and videotaped were considered to be appropriate to the children at this school, although some were considered to last longer than might have been desirable. This was noted

by teachers, for example, as they observed a videotape of a group discussion in which sledding rules were discussed and adopted using a consensus decision-making process typical to Friends schools. This particular discussion lasted a over 30 minutes, with the majority of children staying with the process to the end. The teachers' primary concern, when viewing the tape of this discussion, was that the process would have been even more effective if it had not lasted quite so long--particularly for the youngest children, who were showing visible signs of being tired (several were sitting on the laps of older children, who were literally propping them up). Yet, some of the five-year-olds were among the children contributing the most ideas for sledding rules toward the end of this discussion. This indeed calls into question certain assumptions about the "attention spans" of young children.

What makes such discussions, as well as specific activities dealing with social issues as described earlier in this paper, meaningful to young children? In seeking to find answers to this question, one answer appears to lie in the consistency with which social issues, centering techniques, and group problem-solving processes are incorporated into the daily interactions and curriculum. The importance of creating a classroom climate or context in which social concepts permeate both the formal and informal curriculum cannot be underestimated.

Whereas many of the activities observed are not in themselves unique (e.g., individual differences, civil rights, peacemakers, and other activities encouraging perspective-taking), a major difference may be that in many elementary classrooms these types of activities take on a special activity or "additive" tone. For example, a frequent kindergarten or first grade get-acquainted unit includes an "all about me" of "accepting individual difference" theme. These units do not typically last for over five months, however, as the series of activities on children, friends at school, families, individual differences and disabilities, and friends around the world did in he kindergarten and first grade room at this Friends school. As the young children's teacher Dorothy stated early in the school year, "We'll work on building self esteem

and mutual respect for as long as it takes—we are not going to rush the youngest children through this important work!".

This commitment to meeting the children where they are, in contrast to hurrying them through a series of short, predetermined units is another unique attribute of the school being studied. Also observed was a genuine attempt to build on and incorporate children's <u>own</u> current interests and issues into the curriculum. This was particularly evident with the older children. From group discussions of what to focus on within broad unit topics, to all-school queries generated by older children which asked what children wanted to learn about in the new year, to younger children listing all their questions about a new unit topic, the attempt to include children's perspectives and needs was evident.

Another issue, raised in discussions with the teachers, was the importance of creating a "safe" environment, or a climate in which children could be honest and open with their opinions and feelings. This relates, of course, to the "meeting children where they are" examples discussed above, and emphasizes the importance of a classroom climate in which mutual respect is a priority. A related issue of challenging the children in as many ways as possible, while de-emphasizing competition or pressure to succeed was raised by Sheri, the teacher of the older children, on several occasions. For example, she commented, "These kids really like a press—they need that challenge, and the trick is often to provide as many challenges as possible with sufficient 'safety nets' for times when they're needed." The reference to 'safety nets' referred to a supportive environment where children were not judged negatively or laughed at in their attempts to try new skills or learn new material.

The use of frequent group discussions was also considered vitally important to the success of many of the activities and approaches to "teaching toward peace" observed at this school. Whether addressing a problem between children, recent improvement in how meeting for worship had gone, or discussing what to tell a

partner school in Bogata, these meetings occurred several times every day, and at least attempted to involve all the children. Obviously, some children appeared to enjoy this process more than others. This was particularly evident when interviewing the children individually. Some felt, for example, that too much of this was done, while most considered this to be an important activity at their school and appeared to appreciate the fact that they were listened to and did not have all decisions made for them by teachers.

The issue relates directly to broader issues of power and voice in the classroom discourse. The data showed that there were frequent opportunities for children to be empowered with opportunities for discussion and decision-making. The importance of children having a voice in classroom decisions and activities cannot be underestimated in addressing the larger social issues which children were learning about. The role-modeling of genuine listening to each other was also considered a key variable in creating a classroom climate which encouraged self expression and perspective-taking. This was modeled not only in teachers interactions with children, but in team teachers' interactions' with each other. The role of humor, as discussed in the previous section, was also seen as contributing to a supportive climate in which teachers were willing to laugh at themselves or at situations which might have frustrated many teachers.

In conclusion, the initial analysis of over 200 hours of observational data and interviews with teachers and children showed the importance of the consistent creation of an open and supportive classroom climate which encouraged children's self-expression, appreciation of others who had worked for social change, and repeated experiences in group processes dealing with social problem-solving, consensus decision-making, and centering techniques. This combination of experiences provided an encouraging example of the possibilities of early education in encouraging social responsibility and important steps toward peace.

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